

Stimulus News You Can Use

WSDOT's informal weekly update about the
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act)

Wednesday, September 9, 2009



The stimulus story this week

State and local government contractors completed eight more highway projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, increasing the total to 19 completed projects, or 10% of the projects. Low bids on stimulus projects are helping fund more projects.

Washington is preparing applications for the \$1.5 billion in competitive TIGER Recovery Act grants for highway and infrastructure projects on September 15.

This week by the numbers (project dollars in millions):

<i>Individual highway projects</i>	State	Local	Total	Notes
Total funds	\$340	\$152	\$492	
Obligated funds* (see Key Issues item)	\$220.1 (64%)	\$133.4 (88%)	\$353.5 (72%)	Funds FHWA approved All funds must be obligated by March 1, 2010
Projects certified	36 (100%)	149 (100%)	185 (100%)	All projects certified
Projects obligated	35 (97%)	138 (93%)	173 (94%)	FHWA has approved some or all funds for the projects
Project delivery to date				
Operationally complete	8 (22%)	10 (7%)	18 (10%)	Seven completed projects reported this week
Awarded	28 (78%)	123 (83%)	151 (82%)	One project awarded this week
Advertised	31 (86%)	137 (92%)	168 (91%)	Two advertised local projects are not receiving funds due to low bids
Certified, awaiting advertisement	5 (14%)	10 (7%)	15 (8%)	
Safety funding buckets (\$12)* <i>Note: State \$ only</i>	Rumble strips	Cable median barrier	Total	Notes
Awarded	17	6	23	
Advertised	27	6	33	
Transit projects	Large urban	Small urban	Nonurban/rural	State total
Percent of total \$179 awarded	97%	97%	100%	98%
July employment	State	Local	Total	Notes
Payroll	\$3.1	\$2.3	\$5.4	Average wage is \$38/hour
Hours	82,962	61,346	144,308	More than double the June total of 57,698
FTEs	480	355	834	FTE = 173 hours per month
Individuals paid in part or total with stimulus funds	1,608	1,805	3,413	Note: Not a count of unique employees
*\$4M in state enhancement funds provided to locals. While WSDOT controls \$340M, the total for obligation authority is \$344M, which is the basis of the percentages in this table, and basis for USDOT Review on 3/01/10.				

Key issues: State

- **Seven more Recovery Act projects completed** – Eight more Recovery Act highway projects are now operationally complete, bringing the number of completed projects to 19. One state highway project in Spokane County and seven local projects in six counties were completed and opened to traffic.
 - WSDOT – SR 206/Jct US 2 to Bruce Road
 - La Conner – Maple Street Overlay and Sidewalks
 - Adams County – Lee Rd – Phase 1
 - Pullman – College Hill Arterial Reconstruction
 - Spokane County – Rutter Parkway
 - Spokane County – 5 Mile + Strong Rd. Project 1
 - Stevens County – County Wide Pavement Preservation
- **Recovery Act obligations decrease** – Low bids on two large stimulus projects, an I-405 auxiliary lane widening in King County and the I-5/SR 501 Interchange in Clark County, combined with savings on other projects, led to a \$17.1 million decrease in planned spending on Recovery Act projects this week.
 - Obligated funds were reduced from \$237.1 million to \$220 million.
 - The surplus funds will help pay for more projects. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is currently providing funding for 35 Recovery Act projects. Five more state highway projects are pending obligation using the surplus Recovery Act funds. Governor Gregoire has certified one project for Recovery Act funds and the other four are in the certification process.
 - This week Lake Stevens advertised the fifth local highway project receiving surplus Recovery Act funds due to low bids on local projects. The Lundeen Parkway Roundabout will receive \$920,000. Two other local projects are awarded and two others are advertised. Five more local projects receiving surplus Recovery Act funds are in the certification process.
- **One more highway project awarded**
 - **Local project**
 - College Place – Whitman Drive MultiUse Path

Key issues: National

- **Deadline approaches for \$1.5 billion Recovery Act grant applications** – States and local governments nationwide are preparing applications for the \$1.5 billion in Surface Transportation Discretionary Grants (TIGER Grants) for projects chosen through a competitive, nationwide grant process.
 - Washington is preparing applications for the September 15 deadline.
 - U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood will select the projects and announce decisions in January.

- **Congressional committee issues report on project delivery** – On September 2, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee released updated transparency and accountability information by state and formula funds under the Recovery Act. The report gave each state a composite score based on project dollars out to bid, under contract, and under way as of July 31.
 - Washington ranked 32nd overall with 72.6% funds on advertised projects, 47.5% of funds on awarded projects and 21.4% of funds on projects under way, for a composite score of 40.7%. The average composite score was 41%, with 60% of projects advertised, 40% of projects awarded and 32% of projects under way.
 - The rating did not compare or account for the amount of Recovery Act funding or the number of projects in ranking states
 - The report did not rank job creation, but based on its published data, Washington is among the nation's leaders in infrastructure employment. Washington ranks ninth in total highway employment and third in overall Recovery Act employment (this includes transit, fixed guideways, and clean water projects.)
- **Government Accountability Office (GAO) to release report** – GAO will release its third review of the Recovery Act on Sept. 23. The report reviews delivery and performance in 16 states and the District of Columbia.
- **Recovery Act highway projects under construction nationwide** – 3,455 stimulus projects costing \$10.1 billion are under construction in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and on federal lands, the FHWA reported on its [website](#). The FHWA has obligated \$18 billion of \$26.8 billion (68%) to 7,165 projects.

Stimulus project of the week

Recovery funds create opportunities for local agencies, citizens in Washougal

Contractor crews across the state have been hard at work all summer, improving highways and local roads alike. WSDOT's Local Programs partners with cities, counties and other local organizations to secure funding for projects that develop and improve local communities. One such project is currently under way in the city of Washougal: the [SR 14 Pedestrian Tunnel](#).

In early May, the City of Washougal's contractor, Coffman Excavation, LLC of Oregon, began construction on a pedestrian tunnel underneath SR 14 to improve safety and connectivity between the newly reconstructed city core and the Columbia River waterfront. WSDOT's Local Programs Manager Ken Hash partnered with the city to secure funding and provide support for the project. "Any amount of money (small or large) goes a long way in a small town," said Hash. "It's projects like these that give a town its unique identity."

Without Recovery Act funds, there was no guarantee this project would have been built. Likewise, several contractor crew members acknowledge that without this project, there was no assurance they would be presently employed. "If this project didn't exist, I'd probably be somewhere, but I wouldn't be guaranteed a job or a paycheck," said crew member and surveyor Kelly Brown. Another crew member, Rick Fox, said he was "laid off last winter and was brought back to work because of this project."

Project Superintendent Kevin Light expressed enthusiasm about the project because “this project has enabled us to continue working and bring employees back to work.” Additionally, Light was excited to be involved in the construction of a downtown feature that he believes will be an integral part of his town and family history. “I’m so excited about this project because my grandkids will actually be able to see something that their grandfather helped build.”

The SR 14 Pedestrian Tunnel project is a reminder that transportation improvements go so much further than state highways – they can have a lasting effect on the health of communities. While stimulus funds are providing work for many individuals, the funds are also enabling the construction of projects that will endure long after the recession has ended.

Important dates

- **September 15:** Deadline for \$1.5 billion TIGER discretionary grant applications
- **September 20:** Next congressional accountability report is due
- **September 30:** National Fish Passage Program habitat restoration grant application due
- **October 2:** Applications for Track 2 FRA High-Speed Passenger Rail grants are due
- **October 10:** WSDOT submits first new federal OMB quarterly performance report

Websites of interest

- WSDOT recovery act website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/funding/stimulus>
- Washington recovery act website: <http://www.recovery.wa.gov/>
- Federal recovery act website: <http://www.recovery.gov/>
- FHWA recovery site: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/index.htm>
- Federal Transit Administration recovery site: www.fta.dot.gov/recovery
- Federal Rail Administration recovery site: www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2153
- Federal Aviation Administration recovery site: <http://www.faa.gov/recovery>
- OMB recovery website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recovery_default/

Highway projects advertised or planned for advertisement soon

Lead agency	Project description	OFM jobs estimate¹	Funding – stimulus dollars	Total project budget	Advertisement date
Lake Stevens²	Lundeen PKWY Roundabout	20	\$920,000	\$1,990,000	Advertised on September 2
¹ The OFM job estimate is calculated using the Office of Financial Management’s multiplier, which includes direct, indirect, and induced jobs. See www.wsdot.wa.gov/funding/stimulus/jobs for more information.					
² This project is funded with surplus stimulus funds. See www.wsdot.wa.gov/funding/stimulus/projectlist#tier2 for more information.					
Data Source: WSDOT Highways and Local Programs.					
See full project list at - http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Funding/stimulus/ProjectList.htm					